

REMARKS

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and in view of the reasons which follow.

Please note that claims 28-29 are pending in this application in addition to claims 1-10 and 35-38, contrary to what is stated in the Office Action Summary Sheet of the final Office Action mailed March 17, 2003. In the Office Action of September 3, 2002, claims 1-10 and 28-29 were considered to be included in GROUP I, whereby Applicant selected that group in a Reply to Restriction Requirement filed September 24, 2002. Claims 28-29 have not been deleted from this application, and thus claims 1-10, 28-29 and 35-38 are presently pending for further consideration. It is noted, however, that claims 28 and 29 are addressed in the body of the Office Action on pages 3-5.

In the final Office Action, claims 5-10, 28 and 29 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,883,621 to Iwamura; and claims 1-4 and 35-38 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Iwamura in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,054,022 to van Steenbrugge. These rejections are traversed with respect to the presently pending claims, for at least the reasons given below.

According to the present invention, the system operates as a single system from a user's view. For example, if a plurality of storing apparatuses exist on a network, the plurality of storing apparatus appear to be a single storing apparatus from the perspective of a user. When a picture recording is programmed or reserved, the system automatically determines which storing apparatus stores the picture, and therefore, a user does not need to be conscious of which storing apparatus stores the picture. Similarly, when a picture is reproduced or played, the system automatically determines which storing apparatus the picture is played from, and therefore, a user does not need to be conscious of which storing apparatus the picture is played from.

On the other hand, according to Iwamura, a user needs to determine and designate which apparatus should be connected to which apparatus.

According to the present invention as now explicitly recited in each of the presently pending independent claims, the "states" is related to any one of "functions or application program interfaces," "service-availability" and "stored programs."

Registration of the states related to functions or application program interfaces is disclosed in Figure 3 of the drawings and the related description of that figure in the specification. Search for the states related to functions or application program interfaces is disclosed in Figure 5 of the drawings and the related description of that figure in the specification.

Confirmation of states related to service-availability is disclosed in Figure 6 of the drawings and the related description of that figure in the specification. If an apparatus has sent a component register request and has not sent a component lock notification, the apparatus is notified by a component search response replying to a component search request. If the apparatus is used by another apparatus, a component lock notification is made.

Registration of states related to a stored program is disclosed in Figure 3 of the drawings and the related description of that figure in the specification. Searching for states related to stored program is disclosed in Figure 4 of the drawings and the related description of that figure in the specification.

With respect to "the states related to functions or application program interfaces," for example, if a tuner is connected to another tuner instead of a storing apparatus, then it is impossible to record a television program using that tuner. Therefore, the former tuner searches for an apparatus which has a function of recording a television program on the basis of the "states relating to functions or application program interfaces." If MPEG2 data is supplied to an MPEG4 reproducing apparatus, then it is impossible to reproduce the MPEG2 data using that apparatus. Therefore, an apparatus for storing the MPEG2 data searches for an MPEG2 reproducing apparatus on the basis of the "states relating to functions or application program interfaces."

With respect to "the states related to service-availability," for example, it is impossible to have an apparatus having a single tuner to simultaneously receive two programs. Therefore, service-availability at each time is investigated even if an apparatus has a desired function on the basis of "the states related to service-availability," and the communication partner is limited to the only available apparatus that can perform that desired function.

With respect to "the states related to stored programs," for example, if a first program is stored in a first storing apparatus and a second program is stored in a second storing apparatus, it is necessary to select the first storing apparatus to reproduce the first program. Therefore, "the states related to stored programs" is used for such selection.

According to Iwamura, it merely discloses that one can determine physical connectability of each apparatus in order to make a topology map. Therefore, a user needs to examine the function and availability of each apparatus in order to establish a connection between apparatuses. In that regard, Iwamura's invention merely corresponds to the features shown in Figure 2 of the drawings. That is, Iwamura's invention merely provides for an existence check of an apparatus.

According to van Steenbrugge, the other reference cited against some of the presently pending claims, information on apparatuses is merely information on the names of apparatuses, such as "VCR1" and "TV1," and the information on apparatuses does not correspond to the information of states related to functions of apparatuses. Therefore, similarly to Iwamura, in van Steenbrugge a user needs to examine the function and availability of each apparatus in order to establish a connection between apparatuses.

Further, according to Iwamura and van Steenbrugge, there is no mention of a function to automatically determine in which apparatus a recorded program is stored in.

Accordingly, since the features disclosed in Iwamura and van Steenbrugge do not teach or suggest all of the features of the presently

pending claims, these claims are patentable over the combined teachings of these two references.

Therefore, Applicant believes that the present application is now in condition for allowance, and an early indication of allowance is respectfully requested. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, applicant hereby petitions for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorizes payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date

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